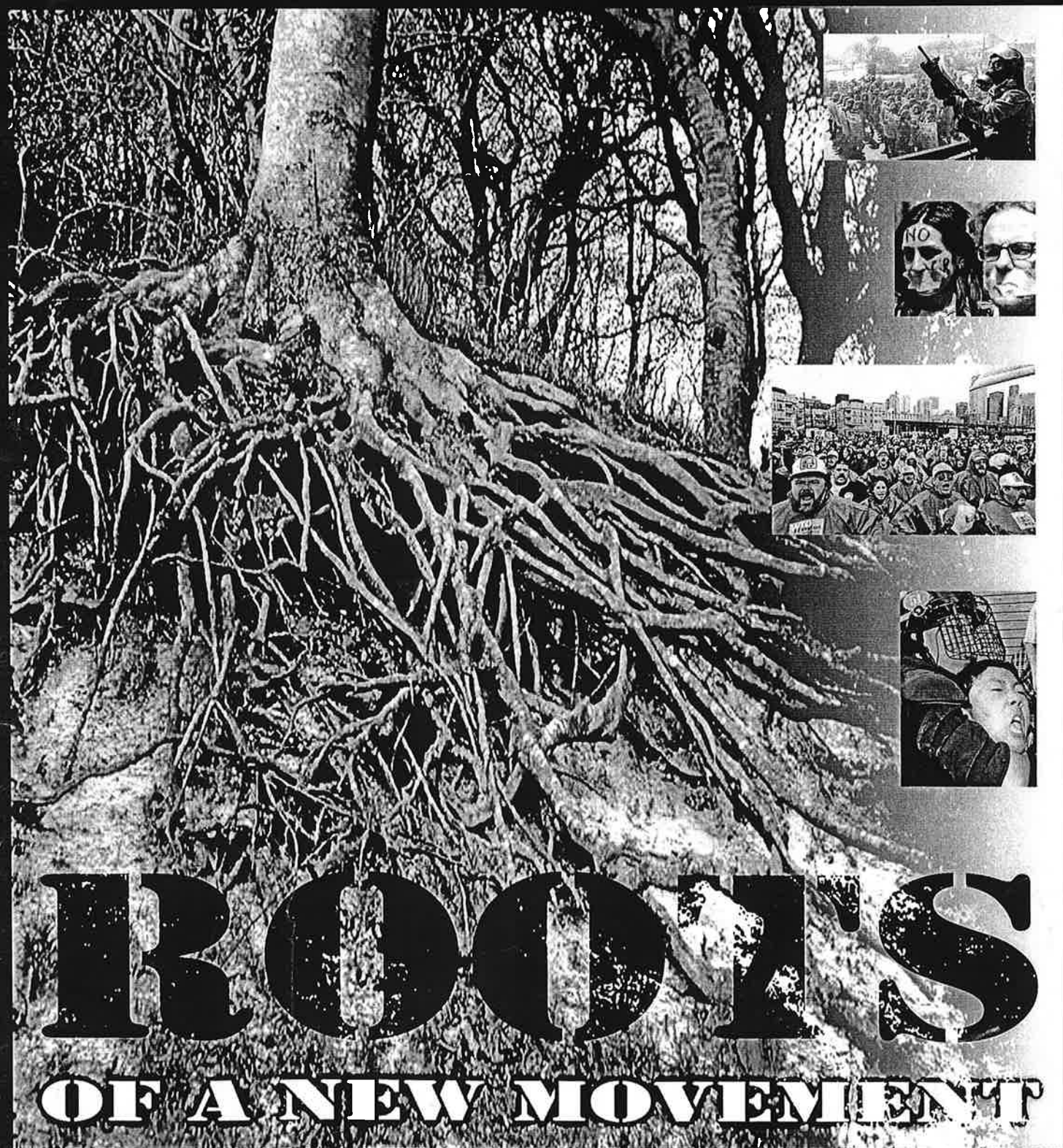


socialist review

aotearoa / new zealand

for a socialist & democratic alternative

issue 8 spring 2001 \$2



genoa & the anti-capitalist movement • sanford • campaigns • power crisis



Above: Union march, Seattle, 30 November 1999
 Above Left: "We Win", Melbourne, September 2000 Below: Seattle

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We welcome your letters: Please send to either of the addresses below



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O5

Shut down Business NZ!

On 6 October many of the world's rulers will be attending the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Brisbane to discuss ways to further the agenda of privatisation and free trade. Just a few days earlier at the Commonwealth Business Forum in Melbourne some of the world's richest bosses will be meeting to try and launch a new round of trade negotiations ahead of the next World Trade Organisation (WTO) summit in Qatar.

The \$20,000-a-head invited guest list includes the representatives of global corporations like BP and Rio Tinto (whose use of armed paramilitaries against villagers in the PNG highlands has been well documented), as well as right-wing scumbags like Roger Kerr, Executive Director of the New Zealand Business Roundtable. Their efforts will be directed towards getting the leaders of the Commonwealth countries to ratify the General Agreement on Trades and Services (GATS), which will lead to the privatisation of many essential services such as water, health and education.

In the developing world countries like Uganda and Papua New Guinea have been forced to undergo similar programmes by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in order to safeguard the interests of foreign investors. The introduction of GATS will make it illegal for governments to regulate against foreign and domestic competition in the provision of services – which have been described as “anything you can buy and sell but can't drop on your foot”.

programme of “trade liberalisation” is coming from the major corporations and other private sector lobby groups. “Without the enormous pressure generated by the American financial services sector,” said a spokesperson for the WTO, “there would have been no services agreement.” But business has also found willing allies among politicians like Tony Blair and John Howard. And our own Labour-Alliance Government has been only too happy to jump on the free trade bandwagon and proclaim that we stand to benefit substantially from welcoming these multinationals to our shores.

But at the same time as we are being bombarded with this propaganda, resistance is growing internationally. Over the last three years, hundreds of thousands of people in all parts of the world have taken to the streets in collective protest. Their energy and anger has been directed against the exploitative, corporate driven programme of globalisation.

Instead of letting a handful of nameless bureaucrats decide the shape of the future, people from all walks of life have argued for the right to participate in making the decisions that affect all of us. Visible democracy has been the catchcry of the new movement. It hasn't been about single issues. Environmentalists and trade unionists, anti-GE activists and indigenous land rights fighters have come together under the same banner. They've stood and fought against the sale of the Earth and its inhabitants for the profit of a greedy few.

This hasn't been something just confined to North America, or Europe, either. Though the anti-corporate movement was sparked off by the Battle of Seattle in 1999, and most recently flared up with the violent repression of protests in Genoa, these have just been the most visible events to have occurred so far. Lots of other actions have taken place, in lots of different places – from Guatemala to Taiwan, from Sweden to Australia.

Last year the World Economic Forum meeting in Melbourne was effectively shut down by a mass demonstration made up of environmental activists, students, and workers angry at the anti-planet, pro-rich, policies of the conference.

It is clear that much of the momentum for this

In October further protests are planned to shut down the Commonwealth

Heads of Government Meeting in Brisbane. The last time this lot got together around a table they did a fair bit of damage to humanity and the world - but what else would you expect from a group prepared to ignore repeated human rights abuses in member states like Nigeria? Mass blockades are also being planned in Melbourne to try and disrupt the Commonwealth Business Forum.

Here in Aotearoa the Employers' and Manufacturers' Association (EMA) and its political arm Business NZ has been behind much of the right wing policy agenda of the last 15 years. The EMA and Business NZ are a product of a recent merger of the Manufacturers' Federation and the New Zealand Employers' Federation. It is now the largest business association in New Zealand, and arguably the most influential.

The NZEF was at the forefront of pushing for the Employment Contracts Act and benefit cuts in 1991. It has also actively supported the other features of the post-1984 neoliberal agenda: tax cuts for the rich, user-pays and reduced public spending in health and education, privatisation, the fiscal envelope rip-off, market rents for state housing, and so forth. "We must be prepared to see some New Zealanders do very much better than others," was the comment from Murray Horn, a leading policy adviser under both Roger Douglas and Ruth Richardson and now vice-chairperson of the Business Roundtable.

More recently, the Employers' Association opposed the tiny elements of the Employment Relations Act that were positive for unions, is actively opposing parental leave, and is continuing to pressure the Labour-Alliance Government to move in an even more pro-business direction. It opposes any environmental protection that undermines business profits.

By shutting them down on 5 October we can not only show our solidarity with the demonstrations in Brisbane and Melbourne - we can also begin to build such a movement on the ground here in Aotearoa. To do this however we need as many people and as many organisations to get involved as possible. Together we can send a powerful message that *our world is not for sale!* ■

Unions: The beginning of the recovery?

Total membership of trade unions has increased - for the first time since 1985.

According to a detailed annual survey conducted by Victoria University's Industrial Relations Centre, the number of workers belonging to a union rose by 16,100 to 319,000 between 1999 and 2000.

These figures are also reflected in a just-released Labour Department report, which confirms the increase and shows that 17.7% of the total workforce is now unionised, representing a 5.7% increase in membership since December 1999.

There was also a dramatic increase in the total number of unions - which rose from 82 to 134. This is thought to be due to collectives of workers registering as unions in order to allow them to negotiate with bosses under the new Employment Relations Act (ERA).

But the vast majority of new union *members* have joined established trade unions.

There are two important conclusions that follow from this:

Firstly, the ERA seems to have achieved Labour's key aim of formalising negotiations between workers and bosses through the union officials, and of strengthening the position of those officials. Under National's Employment Contracts Act, up to 14% of workers bargained through non-union "workplace collectives".

By limiting bargaining rights to registered trade unions, Labour's aim is not primarily to increase union membership, or "give the unions more power", but to ensure that union officials with a stake in maintaining "industrial peace" and "good relations" with employers, are more firmly in control of workplace negotiations.

The second point relates to the underlying reason why Labour urgently

[in brief...

wants to formalise these workplace negotiations: that is, after years of decline, the union movement is gradually starting to rise from its sickbed and recover.

We have, after record low levels of industrial action, seen a number of small strikes break out in recent months. The point is not that these are still tightly controlled by the officials, or that their demands are still very limited, but that Labour and the bosses know that it is only a matter of time before the logic of these struggles inevitably forces them to go outside the "official" and "legal" arenas of action.

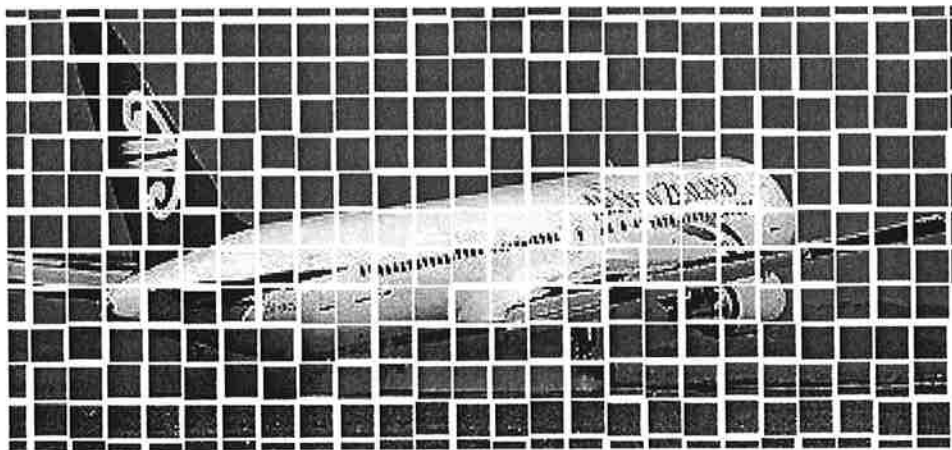
In the next few years the union officials will slowly regain the confidence to call industrial actions. But rank-and-file organisation too will also recover, and, inevitably, workers will be forced to relearn the lessons of the last upturn of the 1960s and '70s - in particular, the need for workers to organise strong independent rank-and-file movements. As these movements develop, the space will once again open up for a wider audience for socialist ideas and politics within the working class. ■

Andrew Cooper

Who owns Air New Zealand? Who cares?

The battle for corporate control of Air New Zealand has been getting a lot of headline space in the mainstream media over the last couple of months. Singapore Airlines, who already own a substantial share in the company, want to increase their shares in Air New Zealand and are trying to get the Labour-Alliance Government to alter a piece of "Kiwi Share" legislation – guaranteeing that a certain percentage of Air NZ remains in New Zealand hands – so they'll be able to do so. The Labour-Alliance Government and the Australian government have met several times to discuss the deal, and much has been made by Labour of the importance of having a "Kiwi stake" in "our" national airline.

This kind of argument and concern has only one motivation: to try and make us forget who our real enemy is. What difference does it make whether your boss is a New Zealander or Singaporean? They'll exploit you either way and, even if they happen to live in the same country as you, you'll never see a cent of the massive profits they make. The arguments made in favour of guaranteeing New Zealand



ownership are at best misguided attempts by sympathetic left-wingers to keep money in the country and at worst an example of cynical racism on the part of the Right to distract us as they rip us off.

Either way they do nothing to help workers. Even calling Air New Zealand "our" airline is a joke – since when did we have a say in how it was run? Ever since it was put on the stockmarket, Air New Zealand has done nothing but cut basic services in the interests of getting a bigger profit for their shareholders, both here and overseas.

No matter who owns Air New Zealand, it will never be "our" airline until it is re-nationalised and made a state run service to meet the travel needs of ordinary working families. But that would be a policy too radical for business buddies Helen Clark and Jim Anderton. The only way we can get them to begin to reverse the damage caused by New Right attacks we've suffered over the last seventeen years is by fighting for change ourselves. That would be something actually worth reporting, instead of more boring in-fighting between different sections of the ruling class as to who gets the bigger share of the airline toy. ■

Dougal McNeill

WATERFRONT UPDATE

The latest round of the waterfront dispute opened with fifty protesters staging a peaceful sit-down protest outside the Port of Bluff on the morning of the 4 June. For the last seven months Carter Holt Harvey has been using Tauranga-based Mainland Stevedoring to load logs at South Island ports in a bid to smash the New Zealand Waterfront Workers' Union and drive down wages and conditions.

Despite a High Court injunction barring the union from taking any kind of action that might endanger the profitability of Carter Holt, members of the Bluff community turned out in a powerful display of solidarity with local watersiders. They were joined by people from as far away as Dunedin and Invercargill, all united in their determination to stop Carter Holt from using scab labour on the waterfront through a strategy of non-violent direct action.

While the protesters sat down and linked arms in the roadway, the police launched a violent attack in which one woman sustained several broken ribs and bruised kidneys while six people – including one member of the International Socialists – were arrested and charged with "disorderly behaviour likely to cause violence". They are pleading not guilty to the charge and their case has been set down for trial on 17 September. ■

Tim Bowron

The globalisation of revolt reaches Papua New Guinea

Further proof of the violence of global capitalism – this time on our own back doorstep in Papua New Guinea. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have been demanding that the PNG Government introduce “structural adjustment reforms” so that it can meet its foreign debt repayments and keep investors happy. Prime Minister Mekere Morauta pledged to implement a programme of state sector privatisation, involving mass sackings, cuts to services and more user-pays.

In response the people of Papua New Guinea took to the streets, and on June 21 university students and workers laid siege to the prime minister’s offices in Port Moresby. Police refused an order to fire on the peaceful demonstrators, and Morauta was forced to fly in private paramilitaries from their regular station protecting the mining interests of corporate scumbags like BHP and Rio Tinto in the PNG highlands.

These hired thugs then broke up the blockade before opening fire with machine guns, wounding at least 60 and leaving six people (including a child) dead. Media reports later reversed the order of events by claiming that the shootings were in response to rioting and looting on the part of the protesters. However, even the ABC was forced to admit that the burning down of a department store in which Prime Minister Morauta owned



PNG demonstrators attacked

shares occurred only *after* the massacre had already taken place.

Transport and wharf workers immediately went on strike and the PNG Trades and Union Council called for a general strike. In the meantime a number of activists have “disappeared” and the authorities have responded by declaring martial law. Through all of this has come the realisation that in the words of one PNG activist: “We are not just fighting against the IMF and the World Bank, it is now apparent that we are also fighting our own government”. ■



Bluff Sanford workers celebrate

Partial victory at Sanford

Workers at the Sanford salmon processing plant in Bluff voted to return to work on 22 August after a nine week dispute. They achieved pay increases of up to 8.6%, but unfortunately failed to win a multi-site agreement covering both Bluff and Timaru.

But perhaps more importantly, there was fantastic unity amongst the workers which drew in support from the tightly-knit working class community in Bluff. The local paper, the *Southland Times*, which is not generally noted for its left-wing bias, reported that the workers held out for nine weeks because “of money from the union and community support ... shops donated food vouchers... and [people] shook their hands in the street.” Sanford workers performed voluntary work in return. At least one bakery refused to supply goods to management.

“Bluff workers took their dispute to the community, marching up and down the main street or at rugby games with banners.” ■

Royal Commission whitewash

The report of the Royal Commission on Genetic Modification has ignored the overwhelming majority of public submissions (over 92%) that were opposed to lifting the current moratorium on GE trials. Instead, it has chosen to bow to the interests of big business who insist that genetic engineering is vital to New Zealand’s economic future, and in doing so it has shown its utter contempt for people’s concerns.

On 27 July a nationwide rally was held to show opposition to the release of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) into the environment. Organisers were quick to point out that they were not opposed to the use of genetic engineering for medical research, likening the decision to become GE free with New Zealand’s anti-nuclear stance, which has not prevented nuclear technology from being used in controlled situations like hospitals. In Dunedin over 150 people attended the rally, which attracted a wide range of speakers and was undoubtedly one of the most vibrant and colourful protest events in the city for some time.

Support for the campaign is growing, and has already led to the formation of a Dunedin-based group, the Coalition for a GE Free Environment, which is committed to ensuring that the Government extends the moratorium on field trials so that the issue can be decided in a referendum at the next election. Meanwhile actions are being held up and down the country to put further pressure on the Government and local businesses. For more information or to get involved in the campaign phone Duncan Eddy at the Dunedin Environment Centre on (03) 477-5184 (mobile 025 719 139). ■

Tim Bowron (above and PNG article)

power-less?

The power crisis: the market fails, workers pay the price

by Dougal McNeill

Wholesale prices for electricity at a record high; Trustpower warning we could face blackouts if rainfall does not boost hydro storage levels; power companies turning new customers away and the power bill for working people becoming more and more of a burden in the family budget: welcome to the new post-market reform electricity order.

"Giving more power to the people has been the goal of successive electricity reforms" wrote *The Press* on 4 August. "Time and again they lauded the more-market model as the panacea for New Zealand's power problems. Now the architects of this model must acknowledge they were wrong". But the silence from National and its ideological allies has been deafening. How do you spell "scam"?: D-E-R-E-G-U-L-A-T-I-O-N. None of the assorted crew of National Party MPs, Big Business leaders, Business Roundtable "think tankers" or ACT attack-dogs who set up the whole market model mess have taken even a little bit of responsibility for the problem.

The deregulators promised a period of robust competition, brought on by the breakup of the different parts of the old Electricity Corporation of New Zealand (ECNZ). Consumers would, they said, have hundreds of power companies to choose from, and the competition would drive prices down and inspire technological innovations

that would cut energy costs even further. The reality has turned out to be different. In many areas such as Christchurch and the West Coast customers are denied choice through a simple lack of competition.

This, Consumers' Institute chief executive David Russell says, "makes a

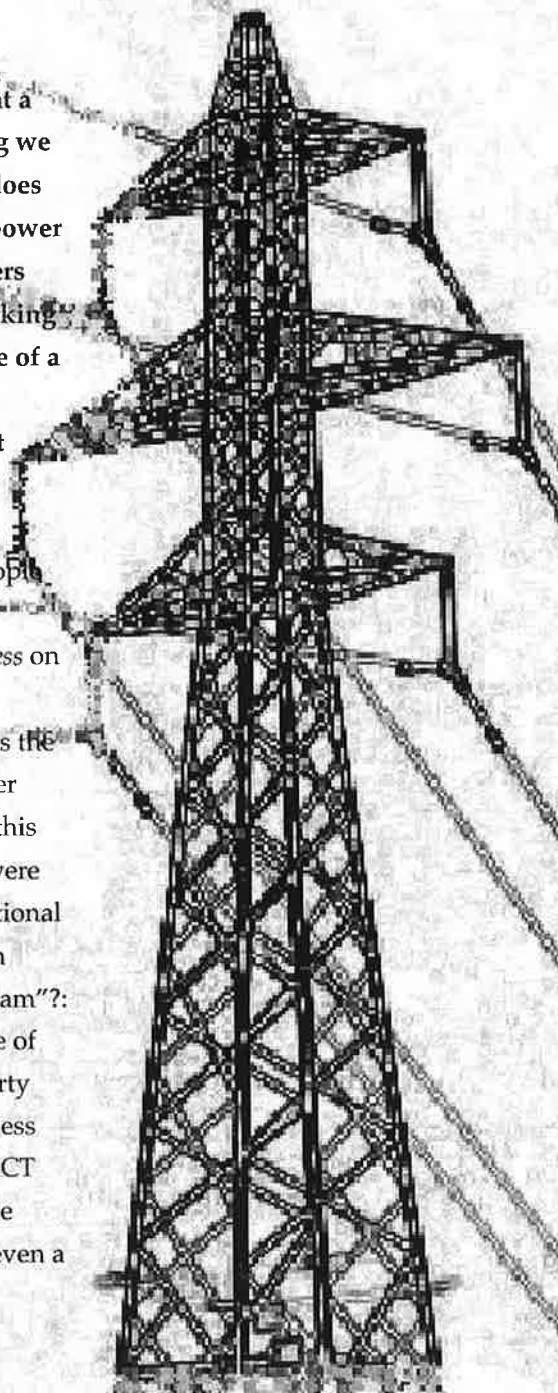
mockery of the electricity reforms". Meanwhile in other centres new customers have been turned away by companies unwilling to take the costs of wholesale prices themselves. Company profits are being maintained in the same way they always are, by passing costs on to customers and by attacking their workers' conditions.

And if, like me, you're on a very limited budget then you'll know what a difference the new cost of power makes. Just to show what absolute hypocrites they are, some companies are now offering special deals to customers who can make extra special savings! What grubs!

Of course as socialists we promote conservation and caring for the environment. But we will not – as Energy Minister Pete Hodgson seems to have conveniently managed – let workers' genuine concern for the environment be used as a cover-up for the power companies' cock-up. The current power crisis is a result of the madness of the market model, not a lack of rainfall.

Crisis? What crisis?

A leaked report from Energy Link consultants raises serious questions as to whether there is even any need to "conserve" electricity at all. According to a 9 August story in *The Dominion*, the report questions why state power company Meridian Energy suddenly became more conservative managing



the key lakes in the Waitaki catchment, and why it raised its wholesale electricity prices at the beginning of June.

Energy Link is an adviser to Meridian's competitor, On energy.

Meridian recently bought On energy's 116,000 South Island customers. In June On energy claimed that electricity generators were jacking up wholesale prices to force it out of the market. Energy Link's report says that as well as possible concerns about low storage levels, commercial reasons might be behind Meridian's conserving water and raising its wholesale electricity prices.

With this extra customer load, and a key competitor out of the way, Meridian felt able to raise prices. Another reason suggested in the report could be to make its proposed new hydro project on the lower Waitaki River look more attractive because of the higher prices and the need for more hydro in the South Island.

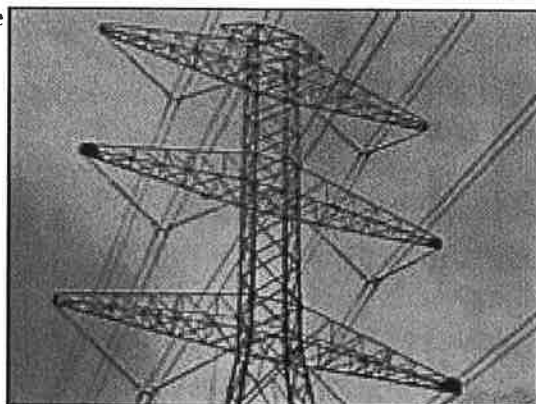
Looking further than the complex manoeuvrings of the power companies, it is clear that at least some are deliberately using the "crisis" – real or not – as an excuse to raise prices for domestic customers even further – raising prices is, after all, we're told, how "the market" deals with an electricity shortage.

Public power: the only solution

The only genuine solution to the power crisis is to take the profit motive

out of the electricity business. The state could take over the entire production, distribution, and servicing of the electrical system and run it as a public service. The private energy companies like Contact, Trust Power, Meridian and their gang will never go along with a return to proper public power, so the Government should use the same power they had when selling off our assets without consulting us in getting them back.

We can negotiate reimbursing the



companies after the electricity market has been re-nationalised, not before. There are many

benefits to public power, especially for workers and the poor. First, all the profits that the private corporations are currently passing onto their executives and their stockholders could either be reinvested in the system or passed on to consumers through lower prices. Second, by eliminating the need for these companies to perform to the business model, better-paying unionised jobs could be guaranteed. We could guarantee electricity to the poor, the sick and the elderly regardless of their ability to pay. Lastly, we could democratically elect representatives to supervise the system who would be much more accountable than a handful of rich and greedy CEOs.

The power crisis is part of a broader crisis caused by the New Right reforms in this country. It's a symptom in the same way that student debt,

underfunded state schools, poor employment conditions and tax breaks for the rich are all symptoms of the capitalist sickness. The power crisis isn't something that is natural and a result of the weather – it's something that is made, and can be changed.

We need to turn workers' despair at the size of their bills into a real anger. We need to convince people this system can be changed. If the despair and frustration that is out there can be organised into petitions, phone calls, public meetings and protests a real movement to take profit out of power then we might come out of this latest electricity crisis as the victors instead of the victims. The fight to get the market out of electricity must be seen as part of the fight against fees and debt, against health and welfare cuts, against spending on arms instead of housing and against the intrusions of the market.

But the fight for public control and ownership also needs to be linked to the struggle for public ownership and democratic control over all of our resources and institutions. Price gouging, pollution and profiteering were features of the old Electricorp and ECNZ as much as the current set-up. The same logic that says power is a good that should be democratically and publicly controlled and allocated to all equitably, applies to water, food, health care and other essentials that have been turned into commodities to be bought and sold for profit under capitalism. The current electricity crisis exposes the failures of the market and why we need to struggle for a socialist society. ■

Further reading

http://www.international-socialist.org/isr/california_power_ISR16.pdf

anti-capitalism

In this special feature, *Socialist Review* looks at the “anti-capitalist” movement. Introduction (*this page*) / Genoa p. 10 / New movement, Old questions p.14 / Naomi Klein reviewed p.23

In the 1990s the gap between the rich and the poor grew wider than ever before. But that wasn't the only gap that was growing: right-wingers like Reagan, Thatcher and our own Roger Douglas picked up economic theories that were discredited 50 years ago and forced them to us through the media. What was worse, even supposedly left-wing social democrats rushed to embrace the market.



Seattle: 30 November 1999

But almost as fast as the gap between the rich and the poor, a gap between rhetoric and reality was growing. It became obvious that the “free market” failed miserably in its promise of “short term pain for long term gain”. A tiny super-rich minority increased their wealth exponentially while everyone else saw real incomes and living standards fall.

For better-off workers this meant working longer hours without benefits like overtime for the same wages. For the unemployed and working poor, things went from bad to worse, with benefit cuts and attacks on healthcare and education.

It was worst in the world's economic powerhouse, the United States, which enjoyed the longest period of economic growth in decades. But on the one hand CEOs in the '90s got increasingly obscene amounts in “compensation” (wages to you and me), and on the other there was a huge increase in “McJobs” – non-

unionised, low paid, casual work, like call centres and other service positions – and increasing poverty.

In other words, what people were told – about the “miracle economy” – didn't square with their experiences of falling real wages and increasing inequality.

For workers in the Third World the 1990s meant all this and more – as the IMF and World Bank used “emergency loans” and “rescue packages” to auction off state-owned industry to their mates on Wall Street and push down wages to starvation level. The World Bank and IMF are still at it, in Argentina, Turkey and South Africa; but they are facing more challenges, from massive strike action as well as armed resistance, like the Zapatista organisation.

The East Asian economic crisis of 1997 destroyed the myth that authoritarian governments could drag Third World economies up to the level of Japan or the

US. It also exposed the destructive policies of the IMF, which forced the former “Asian Tigers” back into dependency by insisting on hardline free market solutions.

A revival of struggle in the West also took place, with student activism in particular re-emerging and the December 1995 general strike in France putting working

class struggle back on the agenda. In Aotearoa in the early to mid 1990s ordinary people, workers, students, Māori, and others felt tremendous anger and bitterness about all these things. But unlike before, when anger had led to action, now there was no organisational means to express that anger through class struggle in the form of strikes and occupations, because of two decades of ideological and economic attacks on trade unions and progressive movements.

By the end of the decade, there was a huge and growing gulf between the myth of economic wellbeing peddled by the ruling class, their media and their academics, and the reality of life as increasingly experienced by millions of ordinary people. The rebirth of the workers' movement, the anti-globalisation and Third World debt movements, merged with this growing anger and came crashing together in Seattle on 30 November 1999. ■

We blame the G8 "leaders" for the violence:

The Group of Eight (G8) leaders spoke of the "tragedy" of the deadly police shooting of Carlo Giuliani during demonstrations in Genoa, Italy, in July. But these politicians all but pulled the trigger.

At the European Union summit in Gothenburg, Sweden, a month earlier, three protesters were shot with live ammunition. One of them, a 19-year-old man, nearly died. Rather than apologising, European leaders made crude threats. "We will not tolerate thuggery as seen in Gothenburg", declared one official.

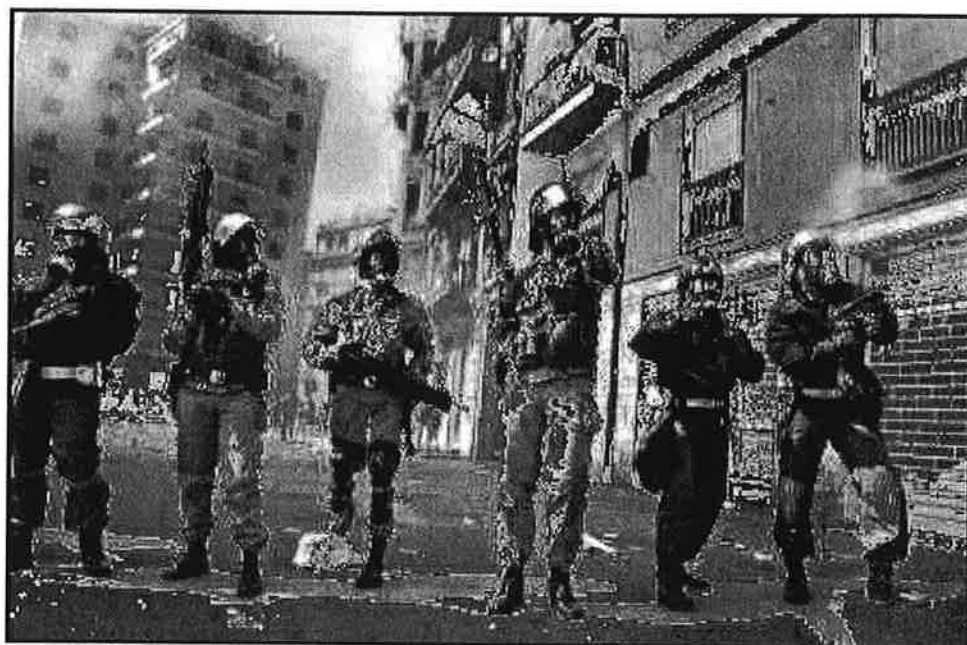
A few weeks later in Barcelona, Spain, cops attacked a peaceful rally against the World Bank, which had already cancelled its meeting in the city.

This set the stage for Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi to unleash lethal force on demonstrators during a meeting of the eight most powerful countries in the world.

It was a decision made well before the summit – and it couldn't have happened without the approval of the other G8 leaders, led by George W. Bush.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair had the gall to criticise those who were "far too apologetic" toward protesters. Translation: *We'll meet anywhere we damn well please, even if it takes a 13-foot steel wall, 18,000 cops and soldiers, helicopters, armoured cars, anti-aircraft missiles – and a couple of bullets in a protester's head.*

The cops – and the politicians who



Genoa pictures from
<http://www.ecn.org/agp/index1.html>

g e n o a

control them – were out to raise the stakes for those who oppose their system.

But what Bush, Berlusconi and Co. didn't count on was the massive outpouring of support for the protesters. Far from being intimidated by Carlo's murder, more than 300,000 people took to

intensified the debate in the global justice movement over tactics – particularly those of the anarchist "black bloc", which engaged in property destruction and clashes with police.

Some activists said the violence in Genoa was a distraction from the real issues. But we should hold the G8 responsible for the violence.

The leaders who ordered the crackdown in Genoa are the same ones who back governments that shoot demonstrators against International Monetary Fund policies in countries like Brazil and Papua New Guinea. The G8 chiefs who denounce "violent protesters" are the same people who rain bombs on civilians in Serbia, order massacres in Chechnya and starve Iraq. So it's no surprise when they use repression



the streets on 21 July to protest the G8. And more than a quarter of a million demonstrated across Italy on 24 July, the day before Carlo's funeral.

Meanwhile, the shooting of Carlo

at home. The debate over tactics has to start from this reality.

On the other hand, some in the movement want to avoid the discussion. They argue that the violence in Genoa was carried out by police provocateurs, dressed up as "black bloc" demonstrators.

To be sure, there's ample evidence of Italian authorities using infiltrators, whose violence served as the excuse to crack heads. But this ignores the fact that a minority of the movement believes that individual acts of violence can spur the struggle forward.

In confrontations with police, this minority can impose its tactics on the movement, even when the vast majority of demonstrators disagree with them – unless our movement develops a way to democratically decide on how to organise for mass protests and carries out its decision collectively.

After Genoa, some people expressed pessimism that this can ever be achieved – even calling for an end to mass demonstrations. This is mistaken. Mobilisations like Genoa are a marvellous way to demonstrate the scale of opposition to the system. The larger the protests, the harder it is for politicians and their media apologists to claim legitimacy for their system.

But the crackdown in Genoa did pose the question of how the movement should deal with repression – and ultimately, how to mobilise the social forces that can challenge the system itself.

The task now is to link the global justice movement that brought 300,000 onto the streets of Genoa with struggles in factories, offices, communities and campuses, both here and around the world.

The protests in Genoa are an inspiration to everyone who wants to build a better world. And they showed the potential to build a movement that can do just that. ■

Article courtesy International Socialist Organisation-USA.



genoa diary

Plenty of fine words flowed out of the 14th-century castle in Genoa, Italy, where the leaders of the world's most powerful countries met in July. The heads of state from the Group of Eight (G8) countries issued statements on everything from free trade to global warming.

But they sent their most important message a mile away – in a small square called the Piazza Alimonda, with two gunshots that killed Carlo Giuliani.

The message: Those who dare to disrupt their fancy gatherings in the struggle for global justice will pay a price.

But if Italy's right-wing Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and his G8 buddies think that they've intimidated us, they have another thing coming.

On the day after Giuliani was gunned down, some 300,000 people took to the streets of Genoa in an extraordinary display of opposition to the G8 leaders and the system they preside over. This protest showed that those who care about global justice are more determined than ever that our voices will be heard.

David Zirin, from the American ISO, describes what he saw:

As we enter Genoa, a city of mountains by the sea, there is underwear hanging from countless windows.

This, believe it or not, is a sign of resistance. Billionaire Silvio Berlusconi, the new prime minister of Italy, decreed that no one in Genoa should hang underwear outside – so that other world leaders wouldn't view Italy as a "backwater." When people can't even hang their underwear outside, you know the weekend will be something we won't forget.

(Continued over...)



"They are eight – we are six billion"

**thursday,
19 july:**

As military helicopters fly overhead and barricades cut the city into pieces, the eerie calm that has hung over Genoa is punctured by a march of 50,000 people from Europe and beyond, in the name of immigrant rights. More than a march, it's a festival of resistance.

Every contingent chants in a different language. Marching bands play *Hey, big spender*. A Swedish group is clapping and singing the Southern Black spiritual *This little light of mine*.

The feelings of solidarity and unity are overwhelming. Rosalie, an African-Italian trade unionist, says, "I'm here as an immigrant, but we have the right to cross borders however we please, just like their money".

A small group from Eritrea and Ethiopia march arm in arm. "Why should these eight people make decisions for the rest of the world?" they say. "Why did they have to close the city? They try to divide us, like they divide the city!" They walk away chanting the slogan of the day: "We are all illegals."

This anger, not just about the issues of the summit, but about what the summit has done to the city of Genoa, is ever-present – as seen by the number of residents in the streets and waving from their windows.

Pietro, a lifelong Genoa resident, was so angry at the Berlusconi government that he grabbed a framed picture of former Socialist President and anti-Mussolini hero Silvio Pertini. "Pertini fought the fascists and wrote the constitution," he says. "Now we have to do both again".

As the demonstration ends, people are already talking about possible violence over the weekend. The news reports say: "Today was a festival, will tomorrow be a war?"



**friday,
20 july:**

I'm sitting in Carlini stadium at 9.30 am, one gathering place for the Friday direct actions to penetrate the heavily guarded red zone that surrounds the G8 summit. Carlini is filled with very young, very confident people.

The direct-action group *Tute Bianche* and others are on the stadium floor, making shields ten feet high and wide. Many are wearing helmets and shoulder pads. All the "weapons" I see are defensive.

I ask one member of *Tute Bianche* what he thinks will happen today. He tells me that he thinks police attacks on protesters in Gothenburg, Sweden, during last month's European Union summit, backfired. "People are more together, and the numbers are greater", he says. "My prediction is that nothing will be the same after Genoa".

Some 20,000 to 30,000 of us march arm in arm toward the red zone, with *Tute Bianche* in the lead. As we sing and chant, we see huge plumes of smoke rise in the distance. We learn that street fighting with police has been widespread since the early morning. The smoke to our sides comes from burning cars. The thick smoke directly in front of us is the tear gas. Masks and bandanas are immediately distributed.

All kinds of rumours are spreading about the fighting in front of us – which is impossible to see because of the narrow streets and the gas. A member of our contingent runs forward 150 yards – and brings back news.

“The front attempted to penetrate the red zone, and all hell broke loose”, he says. “There was hand-to-hand combat where the police were beating people down with batons. The police seemed reckless. They laid into people and found a resistance that I don’t think they expected. People fought back hard, so very hard”.

At one point, a demonstrator tries to break a store window. This was the only store on the direct-action march route that had stayed open that day. Its elderly owner had been standing outside the shop, watching us with a smile. The young demonstrator tries to break the window with his fist, then picks up a rock.

About 12 demonstrators form a chain to protect the store – and physically push the young man away. As one veteran Italian leftist remarks, “That’s how our movement should settle its questions – internally”.

At 5.30, as we march back, the chant “Assassini!” suddenly rises up like a wave, from the front to back. We hear that a young man was killed – perhaps 150 yards in front of us – by the police. We know no details at this point, but people are shaking and unsure of what this will mean for the mass demonstration tomorrow.



forward toward the massive line of police. The booms and tear gas return. The people of Genoa show their solidarity by sending water down to the street in buckets and hoses.

A huge bedsheet hangs from a window. It reads, “Welcome to Genoa, citizens of the world. Always toward victory”. For a long moment, we feel the slogan of the weekend, which adorns almost every T-shirt and sticker in Genoa: “They are eight, we are six billion”.

As the march ends, the tension still hangs in the heat. People start to leave – and the police attack. They don’t go after the street fighters – the masked and padded fighters near the red zone – but about 30,000 peaceful protesters who are leaving town.

The police later raid the headquarters of the march organisers, the Genoa Social Forum, arresting more than 90 people and putting dozens in the hospital. According to later radio reports, jailed demonstrators are forced down on their knees and told to chant, “Long Live Mussolini”.

The right to protest itself has been criminalised. There’s no question that the three days in Genoa raised the stakes for the global justice movement. The leaders of the G8 bloodied their hands on Friday, and on Saturday, they clearly came back for more.

We need to expand our forces, deepen our trust, strengthen our unity – and be confident that a better future lies on our side of the barricades, not theirs. ■

saturday, 21 july:

The news is now clear, and the Reuters picture is all over the world. Carlo Giuliani, a 23-year-old from Rome, was shot twice in the head and run over by a military van. The headline on Berlusconi’s newspaper says this was “in self-defence”.

But every other Italian paper shows frame by frame how an officer in a police vehicle surrounded by street fighters executed this young man. He is the first person to be killed at an Italian protest in 24 years. If the first day of protest was striking by its absence of police, today is like a war zone.

On a hill overlooking us as we gather for the legal demonstration are about 15 police officers in a military formation. Some are in a sniper’s pose. We break into a chant of “Assassini!” and point at them.

One of them fires a tear gas canister about 10 feet over our heads. It is an early notice that anyone who thought the police would be restrained after yesterday was wrong.

It’s immediately clear that we are far greater than the 120,000 hoped for by march organisers. Later estimates will show that the march’s numbers were more than 300,000.

Yesterday’s killing is on everyone’s mind. “Berlusconi Assassino!” is the loudest chant of the day. People are fearful, but confident that the police wouldn’t dare attack such a large contingent.

We hear that the unions – which were supposed to make up the bulk of this march – didn’t show. The tens of thousands – if not hundreds of thousands – of unexpected marchers are largely young people from Italy, streaming up and down the sides of the organised contingents.

As the march makes its first turn away from the red zone, a section of the group moves

The growing “anti-capitalist” movement has raised many important questions. In this two-part article, *Brian S. Roper* looks at questions of political strategy and argues that the revolutionary socialist tradition still offers the best way of understanding and changing the world.



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part 1: new movement, new questions?

Introduction

In the last two years a new global movement has burst onto the world scene. Most commonly described as “anti-capitalist”, a broad series of mass demos have focused on everything from Third World debt to the corporate driven environmental and social devastation and the poverty endured as a result of their “free trade” agenda.

The movement burst into the limelight of the mainstream media with the fantastic Seattle events of November 1999. Seattle was so important because organised workers linked up with other environmentalists and progressive movements in a campaign that wasn’t defensive; but challenged the whole agenda of the robber barons. Since then, a whole galaxy of campaigns and protests have taken place – Melbourne, Gothenburg, Quebec, Genoa – these

names have become synonymous with the new wave of resistance.

The Revival of Struggle

In the decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of Stalinism, neoliberal ideas seemed all-pervasive. The ideologues of neoliberalism trumpeted the death of “socialism”, while social democrats rushed to embrace the market.

Most political philosophers and

theorists, both right and left, responded to the collapse of East European Stalinism by declaring capitalism and representative democracy to be triumphant, and socialism dead. Only a small minority of people argued that real socialism had never been realised in revolutionary Russia, and that Stalin had in fact presided over a bureaucratic counter-revolution. While most people proclaimed the victory of capitalism, we pointed out that even in the most highly developed countries, it was still mired in economic stagnation and mass unemployment, was generating inequality within and between nations, and continually curbed democratic governance.

But swimming against a tide of propaganda that claimed “there is no alternative” was not easy. Classical Marxist theory in economics,



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sociology and political theory was under heavy fire and radical thinkers were on the defensive.

But the massive anti-WTO demonstration in Seattle and the globalisation of revolt has changed the ground of the battle. At the end of a decade-long orgy of ideological self-congratulation, where big business and its professional praise-singers brazenly trumpeted the victory of capitalism and the "end of history", workers, students, farmers, environmentalists, and Third World activists united on the streets of Seattle to shut down the World Trade Organisation, resisting and defying the coercive police power of the world's most powerful state.

While the follow-up protests against the IMF and World Bank in Washington DC (April 2000) were unable to overcome the massive police presence and close the meeting down, the size of the demonstrations over four rain-swept days, involving around 30,000 people, maintained the momentum of the movement. In Australia, the 20,000 strong S11 protests against the World Economic Forum, which was staged at a casino on the banks of the Yarra River in the heart of Melbourne, almost closed it down on the first day. The WEF convention went ahead on the second and third days, but only under siege conditions. Another victory for anti-capitalism. The 26 September (S26) protests against the World Bank in Prague, brought together anarchists and socialists from throughout Europe and shut down the convention a day early. There were many other big demos in 2000, including mass mobilisations in Millau, Nice, and Seoul.

In 2001, in Quebec, Gothenburg and Genoa the movement took a step up to a new level, and met head-on the escalating violence of the state security forces. Quebec set the scene, as the leaders who came to plan free movement for money in the Americas had to be sheltered from their people behind a chain link fence. In Gothenburg mass militant demonstrations against the June EU summit saw three protesters shot and injured by a scared and desperate police force. In Genoa in July both of these elements were carried to a new extreme, with G8 leaders hiding behind four metre steel walls and the police murder of an Italian protester, Carlo Giuliani, which along with the widespread police brutality sparked a wave of strikes across Italy. In

Genoa the demonstrations reached a new peak, as the number of participants continued to snowball to over 300,000 and most importantly began to involve the organised working class. And the death of Carlo Giuliani, far from intimidating the movement, seems to have reinforced the commitment of activists.

New Movement, New Questions

Every new mass movement raises new questions. At a really general level people start asking about basic features of the system: about the causes of inequality and other social problems; about the destruction of the natural environment; about the power of employers and governments, and how this is used against the interests of workers, students and the oppressed; about debt and poverty in the Third World. Protest movements generate all kinds of new ideas by breaking down stereotypes. The questions raised by anti-racist, feminist and environmentalist political movements since the late 1960s remain central to intellectual debates within social and political theory.

We need to work out political arguments at this general level for three reasons. Most importantly, we need general arguments to win the support of people who might



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sympathise with our aims, but need convincing, like trade unionists. Second, whether we're in a movement, strike or campaign we must be armed with ideas and arguments to counter attacks from people who do well out of the status quo, whether governments or employers or right-wing intellectuals. Finally, political movements need intellectual clarity to define the scope of these problems, to identify the causes of them, and work out realistic alternatives.

At an intermediate level there are questions of strategy and tactics. Strategy is the easy part – you work out your aims and the route you want to take to get there. Tactics might

seem to be just a nuts and bolts question, but often this is where internal arguments are the worst, differences over tactics are a concrete manifestation of the underlying ideological tensions between different groups, say anarchists and socialists, participating in a large-scale action.

Related to tactical considerations are more mundane logistical concerns: How many placards and with what slogans for a particular march? What chants best express our anger and articulate our demands? Has the PA been organised and is it powerful enough? And as all experienced activists know, strategy and tactics are irrelevant if the action is not sufficiently well organised, there being a strong positive correlation between the amount of advertising and build-up work for an action, and the numbers likely to turn up for it.

Finally, individual participants are constantly confronted by questions at a personal level: Can I afford to lose or put at risk my job over this? Will I be at risk of arrest? If so, how costly will a conviction be for me? How committed am I to this particular campaign relative to the others that I am also involved with?

One of the most important aspects of the newly emerging anti-capitalist movement is the growing recognition sweeping through many formerly disparate movements and organisations that global capitalism generates the world's major problems. This realisation has pushed crucial questions into the international political arena.

Inside the movement, there are areas of agreement (against free trade, Third World debt and poverty, for workers' rights and environmental protection),

and other areas of profound disagreement (whether to *reform* or *abolish* the WTO, World Bank and IMF). So far there has been agreement over tactical objectives on the major protests, but this will be difficult to sustain as the free trade barons try to divide the movement by winning over the conservative elements with rhetorical concessions; and as host states increase police brutality against the radical wing of the movement. Unity will also be difficult to maintain if the forward momentum of the movement is lost.

The questions being raised by this new movement demand sound answers, and in this article we're going to try and show you why Marxism still offers working class rebels the best intellectual toolkit for dismantling the lies of capitalism and building a radically democratic alternative. The classical Marxist tradition offers the best explanation of inequality, it offers a theory of the potential power of workers, students and the oppressed and a strategy to achieve it. Marxism insists on a close relationship between theory and practice, and contrasts democracy from above and democracy from below.

Their System, Our Suffering

The contradictions of capitalism have worsened since the collapse of the post-war long boom in the mid-1970s and the onset of economic stagnation and mass unemployment. Perhaps the most obvious contradiction is the accumulation of massive wealth by a small minority, and the growing deprivation of the majority of the world's population. The contradiction between potential plenty and actual poverty for the workers who produce

the wealth of society has existed for nearly as long as capitalism, but it has never been more marked. Real incomes for the majority of workers have remained stagnant or declined. Government spending on health, housing, education and welfare has been subject to "fiscal restraint". Most people have to sell their capacity to work on a labour market in order to maintain a reasonable standard of living. We spend a large part of our lives at work where we are governed by authoritarian administrative and managerial hierarchies. Poverty, homelessness, malnutrition, drug abuse, crime and violence are widespread in the midst of societies where labour productivity is higher and the combined wealth generated by society is greater than at any previous time in human history.

In order to understand these things there is really no better way than to return to Marx. In the nineteenth century, during capitalism's rise to a system dominating the entire globe, Karl Marx laid the foundations for a different world-view that not only explained what was wrong with capitalism – but also showed how to do away with it.

As Marx grappled with the complexities of this system, one of his starting points was the idea of "surplus value" which, simply put, means that despite producing all the world's wealth – the goods and services that feed, clothe and generally make life bearable for us – the workers who do these things only get paid a fraction of what their labour produces. The rest – the "surplus value" – gets taken by the capitalists as profits.

This appropriation – along with the complete lack of real democracy in the

workplace and the perception most of us have that we don't really control our lives – led Marx to another key idea – the concept of “alienation”.

It isn't hard to see how all this still applies to workers today: in Third World sweatshops; to French car workers laid off because the Koreans are more “competitive”; to New Zealand unionists told to “contain” their wage demands whilst corporate bosses get even richer.

Capitalists always have to strive to maximise profits. If they don't they'll go under. The need to remain profitable drives capitalists to fight on several different fronts. First, capitalists struggle with workers to keep the cost of employing them to a minimum. Second, bosses struggle with workers over productivity. Battle on this front essentially involves attempts to maximise managerial control over workers in conjunction with the mechanisation of production (which increases the productivity of workers). Thirdly, capitalists battle in the political sphere, by placing as much pressure as they can on governments to deliver policies favourable to their interests (tax cuts, subsidies, anti-union legislation, free trade agreements, and so on).

The theory of surplus value is also politically effective. It demonstrates why employers always obsess about competition and the “survival of the fittest”. If you own a business it's an everyday reality. But if, like most people, you are forced to sell your labour for a living, then the theory of surplus value also explains why you need cooperation

and not competition. Real differences – ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation – exist between workers, and you can rely on employers to play on them when necessary, but we're all working everyday to make Bill Gates & co. a little richer.

Marxism demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of people in capitalist societies have shared social, economic and political interests to make collective struggle against the capitalist class and state both possible and necessary. In this respect, it provides the analytical foundation for militant trade unionism – highlighting both the strengths and weaknesses of various kinds of collective industrial action, as well as unions as a whole. It also remains at the absolute heart of the revolutionary socialist critique of the reformism of parties like Labour and the Alliance. Any strategy that accepts the continued



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existence of capitalism thereby also accepts the continued exploitation of workers, who produce the world's wealth, by capitalists, who appropriate it.

Marxism also explains inequality between countries. The anti-

globalisation protests have highlighted the fact that while capitalist governments always have money for war and weapons, they are not prepared to spend the equivalent of a small fraction of their military budgets to eliminate mass starvation in the so-called “third world”. In fact, Western aid to Africa is less than the amount African governments give to Western financial institutions in interest payments on debt each year. At the same time as hundreds of millions suffer from malnutrition, food stockpiling and dumping is common in Europe and North America.

They are starving, not because there isn't enough food to feed them, but because food is produced for profit, not need. The world's agricultural and fishing industries are driven by corporate greed rather than human need. Massive Third World debt yields a huge surplus for western financial institutions and enables the World Bank and the IMF to force Third World governments to shift agricultural production away from food production for the domestic market, towards the production of cash crops for export.

There's another contradiction in the process of globalisation – during the past century the world has “grown smaller” as transportation and communication technologies continue to advance, as the international division of labour continues to become more extensive, as labour becomes more geographically mobile, and as national capital and financial markets become increasingly internationalised. Yet, at the same time, the overwhelming majority of people feel that they have less and less control over the world they live in. This raises two further issues to be explored here – agency and democracy.

part 2: their power, our power

The power of the ruling class in capitalist society is abundantly clear, especially with respect to state power, the unequal distribution of power entailed by capitalist relations of production, and the role of the media in manufacturing consent. What is less commonly recognised is the way that capitalist power relies on the failure of the working class and its allies to act in a united and collective manner and exercise their capacity to control society.

For this reason it is important to focus, not just on their power, but on *our* power. The concept of class struggle precisely implies a clash between classes with distinctive interests, powers, and collective capacities. In this respect Marx argued: "The *will* of the capitalist is certainly to take as much as possible. What we have to do is not to talk about his *will*, but to inquire into his *power*, the *limits* of that *power*, and the *character* of those *limits*." Hence the rate of exploitation is "only settled by the continuous struggle between capital and labour", a struggle in which "the respective powers of the combatants" is of critical importance.

The potential power of the working class is vastly greater than the power of the capitalist class, because it is workers, rather than capitalists, who are strategically located at the very heart of the economic system. Whether in factories, railways, airlines, shipping and other areas of transportation, construction, banks, shops, supermarkets, restaurants and bars; it is workers who make the "wheels of

industry" turn, it is workers who produce the wealth that is so conspicuously unequally distributed. This is why a mass strike by the working class is potentially a revolutionary act – it fundamentally challenges the power of capitalists and the state to govern society.

What prevents workers from exercising this power most of the time



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is disunity, sustained by the ideological control of the ruling class, a hegemony that promotes in complex and contradictory ways, nationalism, sexism and racism. In rejecting the possibility of collective social transformation, postmodernism has adopted an air of resignation with respect to disunity, encouraging us instead to celebrate difference. Classical Marxism, while recognising the broad range of divisions within the working class, has

traditionally emphasised what we share in common so that we may engage in united collective struggle for a better world.

But no matter how many times Marxists argue for this and highlight the centrality of the working class to any generalised struggle for major social change, the accuracy of such ideas only becomes fully apparent through participation in actual collective struggle.

This is so, firstly, because the potential fragility of capitalist and state power only becomes apparent when this power is successfully contested by the forces on our side of the class struggle – most importantly workers, for the reasons stated above, but also students and/or movements of the oppressed. This is why the WTO protests in Seattle were so important and influential – they graphically demonstrated the potential fragility of the power of the international bourgeoisie and the world's states, while simultaneously dramatically demonstrating the potential strength of *our* power. The second reason is that people's consciousness can change extremely rapidly during involvement in collective forms of struggle, even when these are on a relatively small scale.

In general the larger the scale of the struggle the more likely it is that this kind shift in consciousness will assume an increasingly radicalised and ultimately revolutionary form. This is being powerfully illustrated by the anti-capitalist movement. Of course, the key

figures in classical Marxism were acutely aware of the importance of these rapid shifts in collective consciousness, and it is a key theme in their writings, especially after the 1905 revolution in Russia. For example, in Rosa Luxemburg's brilliant analysis of this revolution she graphically demonstrates why and how revolutionary working class consciousness develops through participation in mass struggles.

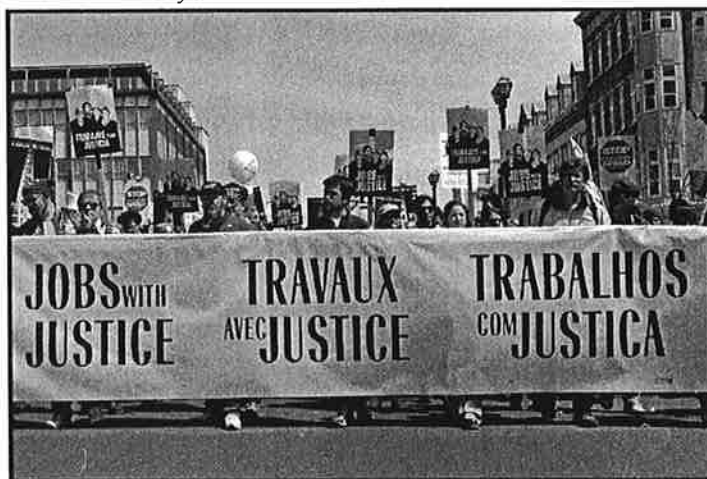
So in order to overthrow absolutism in Russia "the proletariat requires a high degree of political education, of class consciousness and organisation. All these conditions cannot be fulfilled by pamphlets and leaflets, but only by the living political school, by the fight and in the fight, in the continuous course of the revolution". In a similar vein, Lenin wrote that "The real education of the masses can never be separated from their independent political, and especially revolutionary, struggle. Only struggle educates the exploited class. Only struggle discloses to it the magnitude of its own power, widens its horizon, enhances its abilities, clarifies its mind, forges its will."

It is these rapid and dramatic shifts in working class consciousness that ultimately make revolution possible because it is only in the context of mass struggles that workers and the oppressed can become fully aware, not only of what's wrong with the world, but also of why it is like this, of their collective capacity to change it, and of the socialist and democratic alternative to capitalism. As Trotsky observed with respect to the February Revolution of 1917, "Elements of experience, criticism, initiative, self-sacrifice, seeped down through the mass and created, invisibly to a superficial glance but no less decisively, an inner mechanics of the revolution as a conscious process."

Collective forms of action can also highlight the extent to which a socialist organisation can act as the "memory of the class" – carrying forward knowledge and experience gained in earlier struggles to struggles in the present and future. One of the great strengths of most serious socialist organisations on the far left, is that they are repositories and transmitters of a tremendous amount of collective experience from long-term involvement in the unions, on the campuses, and within the various progressive social movements. This is why socialist organisations can generally exert an influence over campaigns out of all proportion to their size.

Socialist organisation is historically of greatest importance

with respect to the dynamics and trajectories of revolutionary movements. While genuine revolutions always involve largely spontaneous upsurges of mass struggle, political leadership is critical in determining the ultimate outcome of these struggles. The contrasting historical experiences of the Russian and German revolutions of 1917-18 is the standard reference point in this regard. Whereas Luxemburg refused to break from the SPD and build an independent revolutionary socialist party until revolution had already broken out, Lenin spent years building the kind of organisation that could play a successful role in leading the masses during the revolutions of 1917. As he observed with respect to the "dress rehearsal" of 1905, such an organisation needed to "reveal to [the masses] our democratic and socialist ideal in all its magnitude and splendour, and show them the shortest and most direct route to complete, absolute, and decisive victory."



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Their Democracy or Our Democracy?

A recurrent theme of the Seattle protests concerned the fundamentally undemocratic nature of the WTO; like the IMF and World Bank, it is dominated by the governments of a handful of the world's dominant economic powers and by the interests of global capital. While the limits of representative democracy are widely recognised by many of those participating in the anti-globalisation protests, these bodies are seen as being even more securely distanced from the influence of the majority of the world's citizens. In contrast, following the closure of the WTO convention in Seattle, protesters were chanting: "This is what democracy looks like, this is what democracy feels like!" The contrast evident here between the empowerment experienced by a broad mass of people collectively participating in direct political action and the alienation entailed by highly indirect forms of representation is a long-standing one in the history of democracy.

In practice, the way that the clash between representative and participatory democracy is played out revolves around the question of whether to seek reforms of existing social relations and political institutions or their overthrow. This is an old question resurfacing in new forms in the current anti-globalisation movement. To seek the democratisation of bodies like the WTO, IMF, World Bank, and so forth, or their abolition? To seek fair trade rather than free trade? Or to advocate the vision of genuinely democratic workers' (and peasants') governments redistributing the world's food and resources on the basis of need rather than profit?

There is an old question resurfacing in new forms here – reform or revolution? This question is one of the most commonly misunderstood and misrepresented on the left because it actually relates to, not only the ultimate goal of the workers and progressive movements (reformed capitalism versus socialist democracy), but also to the entire array of strategic and tactical questions raised in the short term by struggles for reform as well as the industrial class struggle.

For example, how does one place the

most pressure on a government to increase state funding for public health, housing, welfare and tertiary education – by lobbying parliamentary representatives and working through existing political parties, or by organising large scale protests, occupations and industrial action? Or to cite another example from a recent industrial dispute on the New Zealand waterfront – to stage “peaceful pickets” unsupported by widespread industrial action in order to dissuade the scabs from working, or to close the entire waterfront down with industrial action and mass pickets to keep the scabs out and maximise the pressure on the company hiring the scab labour?

It can be argued in this regard that revolutionaries, far from abstaining from the struggle for reform, are actually the best fighters for it. But they do insist that ultimately reform is not enough – it can, as Marx pointed out, succeed in improving the terms on which the worker is exploited, but it will never end that exploitation. A world of equality, democracy, and truly sustainable environmental practices can only be achieved through the overthrow of capitalism and creation of socialism.

Of course, however inspiring it may

Marxism has a radically democratic vision of socialism at its core and still constitutes, in an intellectual sense, the most fully developed alternative to the existing system. Historically, soviet or socialist participatory democracy, in which the majority is directly involved in the self-governance of society was never realised in Russia. This kind of radical democracy will be vastly easier to establish and maintain in the twenty-first century, given the economically, culturally, and scientifically advanced conditions created by contemporary capitalism, than it was in the relatively under-developed conditions prevailing in Russia during the First World War.

In socialist participatory democracy control over production and distribution is achieved through the institutional mechanism of a network of councils and assemblies that combines elements of centralisation (eg. with respect to major investment decisions) and decentralisation (eg. decisions within the workplace). Accountability of delegates is ensured by the right of recall, frequency of elections, regular mass assemblies, the extension of liberal democratic citizenship rights, the democratisation of the judiciary, and the establishment of a popular militia (if necessary) to defend the revolution. Such a system of democracy can only be achieved through elimination of all major forms of exploitation, inequality and oppression and this, in turn, requires the overthrow of capitalism. This is also necessary in order to reduce the average hours each person needs to spend performing productive labour and in order to ensure that there is adequate provision of, and equal responsibility for, childcare. By creating more “free time” socialism ensures, not only that participatory democracy can work, but also that individual liberty,

be, the international movement against global capitalism is still far from assuming revolutionary proportions. But it is already raising the vital question of whether or not there is an alternative to capitalism and representative democracy. Classical



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diversity and self-development is maximised. This is the "democratic and socialist ideal in all its magnitude and splendour" that constitutes a feasible and desirable alternative to capitalism.

Conclusion

The growing movement against global capitalism has significantly altered the political terrain upon which the intellectual battles between right and left are being fought. It is too early to suggest, as some have, that Seattle constituted a world-historic turning point. Most importantly we have not yet seen the kind of upsurge in the industrial class struggle that characterised the period from the late 1960s to the late 1970s. But it is the case that after many years of having to respond defensively to successive waves of intellectual bombardment, the classical Marxist tradition is likely to experience a revival if there is a revival of the international workers' movement and the progressive social movements. This is because it is engagement in "practice and the comprehension of the practice", that, more than anything else, convinces large numbers of people that

classical Marxism still has much to offer those struggling for a better world in the twenty-first century.

One of the most inspiring and important features of the anti-capitalist movement has been the extent to which it has been prompting a reunification of theory and practice. Lenin once wrote with respect to the 1905 revolution that "undoubtedly, the revolution will teach us, and will teach the masses of the people. But the question that now confronts a militant political party is: shall we be able to teach the revolution

anything?" While the recent anti-capitalist movement has not assumed an overtly revolutionary form, it has already helped to re-educate many committed socialists. The question is whether or not socialists have anything to offer the movement, and if so, then what.

Globalise Revolt! is a new 60 page pamphlet from the International Socialists. The term "anti-capitalism" has now firmly entered the language as an expression of the mood of global resistance which has exploded onto the streets of Seattle, Melbourne, Genoa and elsewhere since November 1999. This pamphlet looks at the movement and its prominent thinkers, and the practical and theoretical issues facing the new activists. If you would like a copy send \$3 + \$2 postage with your details to P O Box 6157, Dunedin North. Make cheques out to "ISO".

In this respect, it is the classical Marxist tradition, kept alive during the 1980s and 1990s by a broad range of socialist organisations on the far left together with a small number of relatively isolated intellectuals, that has much to offer. This is not only because of its organic link between theory and practice, but also because it constitutes a rich intellectual tradition providing crucial insights with respect to the key questions of concern to contemporary activists. At the most basic level activists today need to understand what's wrong with the world, why it is like this, how we can change it, and whether there is a feasible and desirable alternative. And it is precisely this set of questions to which those in the classical Marxist tradition have been providing answers for more than 150 years. ■

A more detailed discussion paper, which this article is based on, along with extensive references, can be read at <http://isonz.homestead.com/anticapitalism.html>

globalise revolt!

Lessons from the streets for a new generation of activists

an INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST pamphlet

"Another world is possible"

1999

30 November: Seattle, USA Several days of mass protests against WTO meeting
December: Nigeria 5,000 strike against deregulation of oil prices
December: Argentina Strike wave against IMF/World Bank-imposed "reforms"

2000

15 January: Ecuador Huge demonstrations by workers and peasants against IMF/World Bank "reforms"
22 January: Ecuador Protesters occupy Congress; government collapses
January: Cochabamba, Bolivia Two months of protests against 200% water price increase effectively shut down the country's third largest city for four days; the rises are a result of an IMF-imposed "structural adjustment" programme
February: South Africa Strike wave against IMF-imposed "reforms" begins
February: La Paz, Bolivia 1,000 demonstrate against IMF "reforms"
March: Costa Rica Protest wave against IMF-imposed privatisation and "reforms"
March: Ochozogo, Costa Rica Demonstrations against electricity privatisation
March: Hamilton, New Jersey, USA Demonstrations at IMF/World Bank meeting
April: Bolivia Wave of demonstrations against IMF-imposed "reforms"
16 April: South Africa Protests outside IMF meeting
18 April: Washington DC, USA 30,000 demonstrate against IMF/World Bank
26 April: Lusaka, Zambia Police attack protesters outside IMF meeting
27 April: Buenos Aires, Argentina Demonstration against IMF/World Bank and government policies
April: San Jose, Brazil 10,000 demonstrate against IMF/World Bank
April: Nairobi, Kenya March against IMF/World Bank plans
1 May: Worldwide May Day is revitalised as an international day of workers' solidarity; mass protests in many cities
May: Kenya Demonstrations against IMF/World Bank-imposed "reforms" attacked by police
May: Salta region, Argentina Demonstrations and roadblocks against IMF/World Bank plans
May: Quito, Ecuador Five week teachers' strike against pay cuts and IMF/World Bank plans begins
May: Windsor, Ontario, Canada 5,000 demonstrate against IMF
15 May: Malawi Protest against IMF attacked by police
31 May: Argentina 80,000 protest against IMF
9 June: Argentina 24-hour general strike against IMF-imposed labour laws supported by 7.2 million workers
15 June: Ecuador General strike against IMF/World Bank plans
26 June: Honduras National strike against IMF/World Bank plans
June: Millau, France 50,000 demonstrate to free Jose Bove
June: Paraguay Mass protests and strikes against IMF-imposed "reforms"
June: Nigeria General strike against IMF/World Bank plans
June: Ascunson, Paraguay General strike and protests against IMF-imposed "reforms"
June: Philadelphia, USA 20,000 demonstrate at Republican Party Convention
July: Okinawa, Japan 5,000 demonstrate against IMF/World Bank

July: Los Angeles, USA 20,000 demonstrate at Democratic Party Convention
3 August: Colombia General strike against IMF/World Bank plans
24 August: Honduras General strike against IMF-imposed "reforms"
29 August: Argentina Further mass strikes against wage cuts
September: Sao Paolo, Brazil 100,000 demonstrate against IMF/World Bank plans
11-13 September: Melbourne, Australia S11 – 30,000 successfully blockade WEF
24-28 September: Prague, Czech Republic S26 – 20,000 demonstrate against IMF/World Bank
26 September: Worldwide Solidarity actions with Prague
October: Mexico City 10,000 join demo with anti-capitalist themes
6-7 December: Nice, France Over 100,000, including huge union contingents, protest Euro-summit

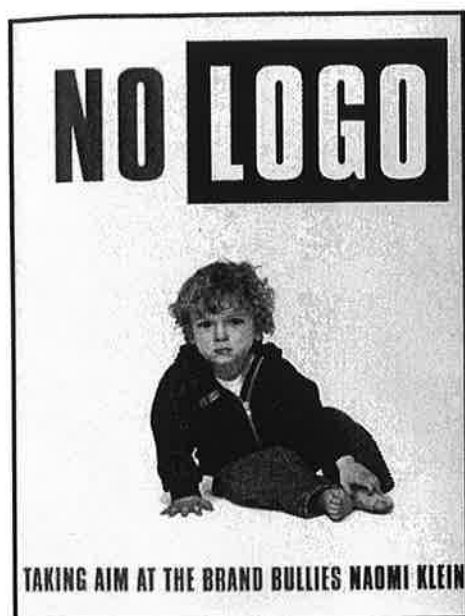
2001

January: Porto Allegre, Brazil Tens of thousands participate in World Social Forum to discuss ways of opposing neoliberalism and gaining progressive social change
27 January: Davos & Zürich, Switzerland Thousands protest the WEF meeting
30 January-4 February: Ecuador Tens of thousands protest government and IMF policies
20 February: Mali Thousands protest IMF and World Bank
3 March: Trieste, Italy 10,000 protest G8 meeting
4 March: Seoul, South Korea 15,000 protest IMF
9 March: Zanzibar, Tanzania Tens of thousands protest government and IMF policies
11 March: Mexico City Hundreds of thousands take to the streets as Zapatista National Liberation Army enters city
17 March: Naples, Italy 20,000 protest Global Forum
20 March: Nigeria Tens of thousands in nationwide demonstrations and strikes against IMF-imposed "reforms"
5 April: Buenos Aires, Argentina Over 10,000 protest against FTAA
1-16 April: Turkey Over 100,000 take part in wave of anti-IMF protests
14 April: Seoul, South Korea 1,000 take part in anti-IMF action
20-22 April: Quebec City, Canada Tens of thousands (including at least 50,000 as part of organised union contingents) protest the FTAA; over 450 arrests, 1,000 injured by massive police operation; solidarity actions around the world
1 May: Worldwide Biggest May Day marches for many years; militant demonstrations in hundreds of cities; huge police operation closes down central London; Sydney and Melbourne protesters blockade stock exchanges
15-16 June: Gothenburg, Sweden Tens of thousands protest against George W. Bush and the European Union's meeting; three protester shot in the back by police
June: Papua New Guinea 6 people shot dead in crackdown on mass protests against World Bank and IMF-imposed privatisation policies
20-22 July: Genoa, Italy At least 300,000 take part in huge demonstrations against the G8 meeting; police murder one demonstrator and, in Italy's terrifying "Chilean Night", raid a school, savagely beating sleeping protesters before dragging them off to days of beatings, torture and humiliation – but the movement continues to grow.

Abbreviations

FTAA Free Trade Area of the Americas
G8 Group of Eight (Most powerful industrialised countries)
IMF International Monetary Fund
WEF World Economic Forum
WTO World Trade Organisation

This list does not include hundreds of smaller actions. It has been compiled from various sources and in some cases it has not been possible to verify numbers taking part in demonstrations. I am grateful to Tony Hartin for helping to research this information. ■
Andrew Cooper



WAS NO SURPRISE

by Penny Hayes

Naomi Klein is a 31-year-old Canadian journalist who wrote a book called *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*. She became political at university, after hearing about an anti-feminist hate crime in which a man massacred fourteen women at the University of Montreal, because he failed to get a place in the engineering school there. According to Naomi: "It was a cataclysmic moment. It politicised us enormously. Of course, after that you call yourself a feminist."

Throughout her student years she was involved in politics largely on campus at the University of Toronto, and was influenced by identity politics, concerning herself largely with issues of the representation and visibility of particular groups (women, gays, Jews: whoever needed it, really), at times with a certain degree of confrontation. She dropped out and became an intern, and has since established a career as a journalist. She now contributes columns to a number of big newspapers in the US on the subject of anti-corporate activism.

Since the publication of *No Logo*, Klein has been identified as one of the "brightest stars" of the anti-capitalist movement, "giving voice to the movement almost before it existed".

The book has been translated into nine languages, and has been a bestseller in Australia, Britain, America and Canada. *The Times* identified her as one of the most influential people in the world under the age of 35. *No Logo* was considered "too subversive" to be taken into Switzerland by British booksellers heading to a conference opposing the World Economic Forum in early February this year, a decision that was only reversed after a massive public outcry.

Its popularity can only have been enhanced by the way it has been embraced by popular culture. The band Radiohead were so inspired by the book that they adopted the slogan No Logo in their latest tour and banned corporate advertising from its British leg,

and even debated about naming their third album (eventually titled *Kid A*) No Logo. Ed O'Brien, the guitarist, was quoted as saying that "No Logo certainly made me feel less alone. She was writing everything I was trying to make sense of in my head. It was very uplifting."

Frighteningly, from a tactical point of view, *No Logo* has been described as "the *Das Kapital* of the growing anti-corporate movement" - the movement's handbook, manual, even bible.



So, we have established that Klein considers herself and is considered a part of the anti-capitalist movement. This doesn't mean she has managed to accurately identify even some of the key conclusions that can be drawn from an examination of the movement. In fact, her analysis is highly problematic.

The basic argument in *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*

Klein's basic argument relies on the observation of the rise of the brand and what that means in the lives of ordinary people, particularly its target market of "young people". She argues this in a sequence of four sections: No Space, No Choice, No Jobs, and No Logo.

No Space refers to the way in which advertising is encroaching on our lives more and more, leaving less space brand-free. Marketing has emerged as an increasingly significant part of the firm's profit-making activities over time. Klein takes this a step further by arguing that at some point during the 1990s, the "image" or "branding" of the company and its activities surpassed the product itself in terms of importance from a profitability perspective.

In No Choice Klein outlines the way in which the corporation grows in size, through mergers and takeovers. The big brands effectively force out small businesses and take over as much physical space as possible, with "mergers" and "synergy" being the business buzzwords of the day. Although she doesn't state this directly, the tendency towards monopolistic market conditions means less choice for consumers. This, she argues, is essentially undemocratic, particularly when coupled with the level of influence giant corporations have over what she calls "culture", and the fact that with the branding of ideas comes the branding of politics.

No Jobs deals with the topic of the labour force, detailing the widely known practice in some of the more flexible industries of moving production to Third World countries to take advantage of lower labour costs, and the subsequent imposition of appalling working conditions, particularly by the bigger transnational corporations. Klein hammers this home by identifying elements of the casualisation of labour taking place in the advanced capitalist countries: for example, the practice of permanent temping by companies who want to get around having to provide job security and other "perks" normally given to permanent employees.

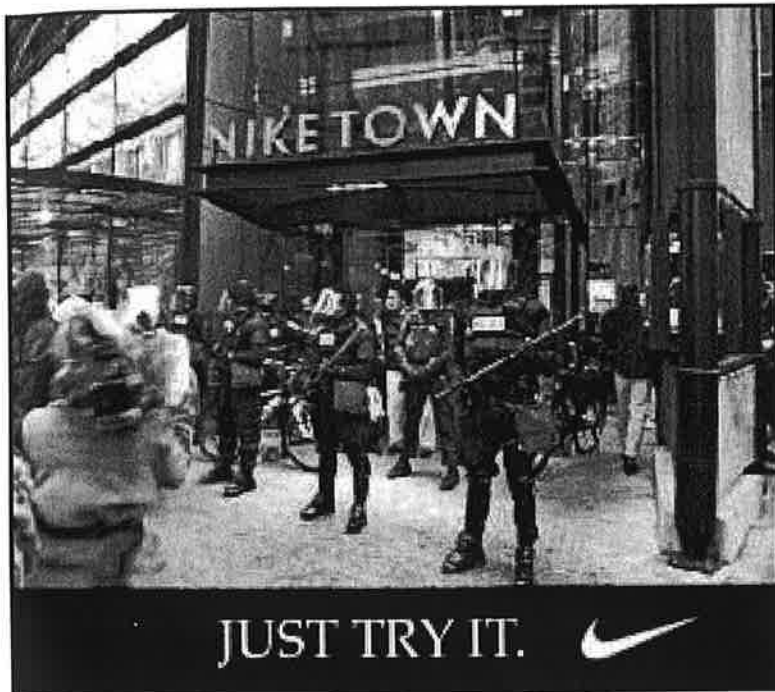
The last section of the book, No Logo, describes what has become known as the anti-capitalist movement, which according to Klein is provoked by the frustration of youth at having even their politics branded by the likes of The Body Shop and the Spice Girls. She argues that anti-corporate activism is on the rise precisely because branding has worked so well. Many of the largest companies have tried to capture the youth market by proclaiming that their products have some connection with ideals, usually in the form of ethical considerations or equality, setting the standard for their own behaviour quite high. A side effect of fostering a sense of righteousness in your target market is that when your branding is revealed to be inconsistent with your practice, your customers already have a seed of consciousness planted, which makes them more likely than before to have the capacity to turn against you. Given that the corporate presence is taking up more space than ever before, they are increasingly vulnerable to backlashes. Klein explains the anti-capitalist movement in these terms.

A critique of *No Logo*

Klein has not really said anything new. In the first section, "No Space", Klein identifies a tendency for the brand to have emerged over and above the actual product, backing it up by detailing the massive increase in marketing budgets in the United States. She rightly points out that the decline of manufacturing in the West has not been mirrored in the developing countries, because transnational corporations have taken to setting up production in countries with cheaper labour costs. All this is fine, of some value in terms of providing ammunition against the corporate PR.

Beyond that, it doesn't do anything else. The book describes some of the concrete symptoms of a new stage of the capitalist mode of production, but ignores the underlying logic of the system that produced them in the first place, precisely because the book lacks any kind of coherent theoretical perspective. In limiting the scope of her analysis to an examination of capitalism in its contemporary form, she ignores the historical evolution of a system founded on exploitation. Instead, Klein prefers to put everything down to changing "culture", manifested in a change in consciousness, including politics, as corporates adopt "values" ultimately as public relations exercises to enhance profitability.

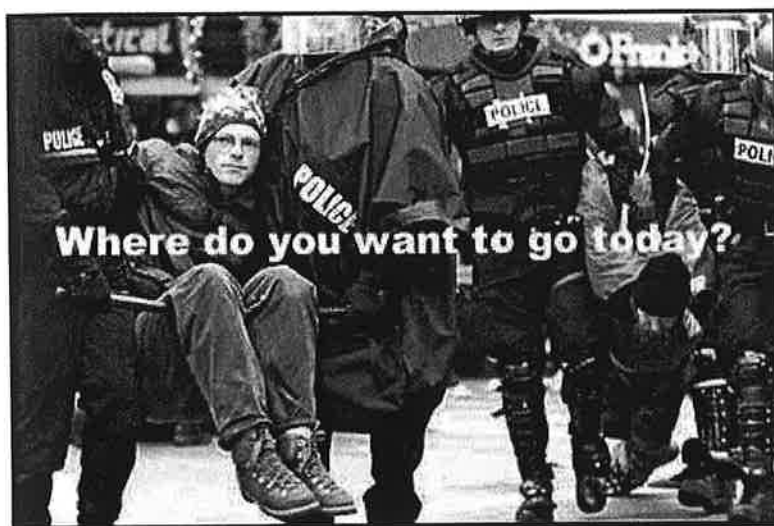
The move to branding, the lack of space due to the expansion of the firm, and the casualisation of labour are not redundant observations. To Marxists, they were completely expected, as they can be explained with reference to the contradictions inherent in the capitalist system. While the book provides some descriptive depth, what Klein has to say comes as No Surprise. Her proposed solution is vague and lacking in any of the essential details: a backlash or rebellion on the part of the majority of



the world's population who are being screwed over by the ruling class. The biggest crime Klein commits is missing the fundamentals of the method to fight back.

A question of method in the anti-capitalist movement, or How do we make sure we win?

Klein rests all her arguments on her own hypothesis that there is a limit to how much people will take, hence, the movement has emerged as the almost definitive response. The problem with this hypothesis is that there is nothing magical about the '90s or about the brand that makes the time ripe for a buildup of resistance like the anti-capitalist movement: rather, the brand's rise reflects one more stage in the development of capitalism. The book lacks this fundamental grounding in historical context which would highlight the fact that it is not the first time people have gathered in large numbers to tell the ruling class what they think of them.



Klein proposes no alternative to the status quo. She remains "optimistic about the potential" of the movement, but this is because she has no expectation for any particular outcome. When questioned about what she predicts from the movement, she manages to dodge the question with a "let's wait and see" approach: we could be moving towards either a "global 'New Deal'" or "something" way more radical than that. Inevitably, though, it seems that this lack of an historically grounded critique of capitalism to properly inform the movement will cause her to default to reformism. Improve labour laws, and win the culture jamming war, and everyone will live happily ever after.

Examples of "culture jamming" / "adbusting" – Nike (below and top) – and Microsoft (above)



So what is the movement then, exactly? Diversity which should be celebrated? Klein argues it is the early stages of a reinvention of Left politics, the beginning of an analysis of global capitalism. As an amalgam of environmentalists, socialists, trade unionists, anarchists and other activists, it has been criticised because of its lack of coherency. And while there is a shared belief that the disparate problems with which they are wrestling all derive from an agenda that is concentrating power and wealth into fewer and fewer hands, Klein refuses to define the movement, because its diversity could reinvent itself, indeed, synergise like its targets: "Before they sign on to anyone's 10-point plan, they deserve the chance to see if, out of the movement's chaotic, decentralised, multi-headed webs, something new, something entirely its own, can emerge."

But while the movement is diverse, two points need to be emphasised. Firstly, organisation is central to building momentum and ensuring the movement isn't quashed by the counterattack of the ruling class. Secondly, while the various campaigners within the movement might place different emphasis on different aspects of a proposed alternative, it is vital that the movement maintains a collective consciousness of the broader, shared objective. We are all fighting against so obvious an enemy - the wider phenomenon of capitalism, with the profit motive as its sole driving force over and above the majority of the world's population and the environment.

Who should the movement's targets be? Klein is again a little confused on this issue. She rightly points out that it's not just a case of bad governments granting power to the IMF, the WTO and corporations in the first place, but she misses the point. She argues they are easy targets and "metaphors for the global economy going awry". This is problematic: firstly, it treats the state as neutrally acting at the whim of big business, with no other mediating factors, which is highly simplistic; and secondly, it places too much emphasis on treating the symptoms rather than the cause: it is not a case of the global economy going awry, but the capitalist economy forging on to its own disastrous conclusions in the way it always has.

Despite her earlier enthusiasm about the movement's scope and militancy, Klein has argued more recently against mass actions as the means for achieving its objectives. When she spoke at a meeting during Adelaide's Festival of Ideas in mid-July, she went so far as to say it was a good thing that the World Trade Organisation had shifted its meeting to the repressive state of Qatar,

because it provided a "much-needed incentive for activists to forget about big protests and organise their local primary schools instead". Working with the local community is therefore seen as a substitute for trying to establish links with the international working class.

Firstly, Klein's fairly elitist attitude towards mass actions (which she refers to as "McProtests") is at odds with the basic idea of democracy. One of the most illuminating aspects of watching footage of Seattle or any of the other mass actions is that you get to see a snippet of what the majority of the world's population feels. People don't gather en masse like they have done again and again for any other reason than because they are angry and have a point to make. Apart from stopping work and seizing control of the means of production, it is the most effective way for the mass of people to make their voices heard above the din of the whinging business elite. As they said at Seattle - "this is what democracy looks like, this is what democracy feels like!"

Even with the best of intentions, it is fundamentally undemocratic to dictate to the movement how they should be fighting their battles. Secondly and even more importantly, the celebration of diversity can lead very quickly to distraction from the shared goal of the movement, by sending its various elements off in different directions and undermining its strength and unity, hence the ruling class maxim "divide and conquer". Thirdly, the reality is that mass actions are inspirational, both because they are effective, and because they demonstrate the capacity of the world's oppressed to fight back. You don't have to be in the middle of an action to feel the euphoria either - you can get it even from watching the highly misleading version in the mainstream media.

The question of boycotting or "consumer responsibility": consumption versus production

Klein's consumption habits are the subject of much scrutiny. Does she buy Nike sportswear? Does she never nip into Starbucks for a flat white? Is her wardrobe certifiably sweatshop-free? She responds to these questions defensively, arguing that it isn't about where you shop. It would be unfair to put such pressure on people when it won't make a great deal of difference anyway: "This is not a consumer issue; it's a political issue. There is a way for us to respond as citizens that is not simply as consumers... The movement is really not about being purer-than-thou and producing a recipe for being an ethical consumer."

Largely, this makes sense. Boycotts and "responsible consumption" don't make the problems of global capitalism go away. On the other hand, Klein doesn't follow this through to its next logical conclusion that culture jamming and adbusting (the practice of beating branding at its own game by presenting alternative media representation, via parodying advertising and hijacking billboards) aren't going to be successful for the same reasons. While they raise awareness, it ignores the process of production - where the real power lies.

While Klein is right to get excited about the revival of consciousness the anti-capitalist movement exhibits, so are the rest of us. And while none of us really know where the anti-capitalist movement will take us, an historically and theoretically grounded perspective at least lets us begin to imagine where we want to make it go, and how to get it there. ■

the corporate agenda in education

In the wake of Seattle a lot of attention has been drawn to the role of global capitalism in sponsoring human exploitation and environmental destruction. A major part of this process has been the opening up of key government services such as electricity, water, health and social services to the influence of market forces. In this article, J.P. Ryan looks at the increasing links between corporations and the tertiary education sector.

As this issue of *Socialist Review* goes to press, it's still undecided as to whether or not the University of Otago administration will accept the fee freeze proposed by the Labour-Alliance Government. Waikato has already announced its adoption of the promised \$35 million finance package, leaving the rest of the country's students wondering just where their "board of directors" stands on the issue.

Given the fact that a refusal to adopt the proposal would mean a fee increase of as much as 30% in 2002, it's a significant issue for students and workers in Aotearoa - one that will affect us all, and for years to come. This will make for increased student hardship, a greater debt burden, and will mean a further disincentive to tertiary study. In light of this, the question must be asked of why

the hell has this situation developed?

More importantly, what can be done about it?

The bureaucrats in our student unions have clearly shown their commitment to soft-option tactics, and they cling to the illusion that everyone's really on the same side in this matter. Since they're unwilling to disrupt the careful "relationship" they've built up with the university administrators, they can only

cop out when faced with a real confrontation over concrete issues. A look at the actual figures shows up the holes in their belief that students and staff share a common interest with the business-oriented tertiary executives.

The vice-chancellors who are threatening fee rises are the same corporate lackeys who have reaped pay increases of more than 40% since 1997, far outstripping average annual pay increases over the same period. Otago's very own Graeme Fogelberg has loosened his belt buckle by a hefty 45%, bringing home somewhere between \$290,000 to \$300,000 in 1999 - but then what's ten grand between mates, anyway?

The profiteering list continues at some length. Chief executives at Victoria, Lincoln, and Canterbury have all experienced the delights of sudden enrichment, as opposed to their staff. An average annualised pay increase across all sectors at Canterbury over the same period came to the paltry figure of 7.5 percent, showing pretty clearly just whose side the administration is on - their own.

Standing with them at the gates to private sector heaven are those nameless corporate bosses whose work they're quite prepared to do, and all for a cut-rate price.

Using the university system as a manipulative tool for the ruling class agenda is nothing new, but the direction that's been taken under successive Labour and National



Demanding the reinstatement of the Emergency Unemployment Benefit: street protest 14 March 2001 (above) and occupying Pete Hodgson's electorate office against fee rises, 30 May 2001 (below)



governments since 1984 has been something a bit different.

Fogelberg would probably agree, and through his teeth might add that things in the tertiary sector have gotten progressively better as a result. But just what forms have these "improvements" taken? A massive student debt burden crippling the social economy, significant reductions in actual educational standards due to reduced funding, and an emphasis on increasing corporate involvement at a day-to-day level.

"I'm not here to save the whales or free the weed, I'm here to make sure that we don't lose money or break the law."

- OUSA
executive member
Ben Hamlin,
driving force
behind the
"Fees Freeze"
campaign, writing
in Critic,
16 July 2001

Anyone with a grain of common sense will look at that last point a little critically.

Since when has corporate intervention in the public realm improved anything? Any number of private sector screw-ups, from TranzRail to the present electricity "crisis", serve as convincing arguments for keeping the bosses as far away from the public interest as possible.

Increasingly, university and polytech administrations are redesigning the very fabric of the tertiary system to suit the

requirements of big business. The \$6.25 million Otago Centre for Innovation - already \$2 million over budget and scheduled for completion later in 2001 - is perhaps the most blatant example of the growing corporate involvement in the universities. Last year Otago University moved to secure patent rights to the work being carried out by its academics and postgraduate students - now it is proposing to hire out its own purpose-built research facilities to the private sector in exchange for large corporate "donations".

Meanwhile, staff have been rewarded with job losses and attacks on their conditions of employment. However, all of this didn't stop Auckland vice-chancellor John Hood from calling for a massive increase in the level of private investment in the New Zealand tertiary sector at the recent "Catching the Knowledge Wave" conference.

Clearly, the election of a Labour-led Government has done nothing to check the growing corporate involvement in the day-to-day running of tertiary institutions. VCs across the country continue to follow a delirious program of right-wing idiocy. They get the results they want, usually in the form of six-figure salary and remuneration packages, or marketing campaigns that feature their very own, less-than-appealing, faces.

It follows from this that they assume they've got the right to mess around with the jobs and lives of workers who have given many years of committed service to the campus. At Otago cafeteria and cleaning staff are now facing a new round of job losses, and all for the purpose of jacking up the profit margins by another notch. Staff and students need to recognise that they both stand in the same boat, and that both are ultimately affected by the policies of the Registry.

VCs and polytech chief executives like to pretend that they're just the meat in the sandwich, forced to carry out

government decisions. The truth is, they love the way that things are heading, and they will fight any moves to steer the ship of state in a different direction. Auckland's present VC is a former director of Fletcher Challenge, and a member of the Business Roundtable.

He shares his seat on council with two other Business Roundtable heavies, founder Harold Tritt, and Justice Elias. Victoria's line-up is equally right wing, having had Roger Kerr on board until very recently. Here in Otago we've got the chair of New Zealand's Stock Exchange, Eion Edgar, as our chancellor, while Graeme Fogelberg is a regular reader of all the fine publications produced by the Business Roundtable thugs (as occupiers of his Registry office in 1996 discovered).

The corporate agenda in education need not, and must not, go unchallenged.

Already this year at Otago there have been encouraging signs. In March over 300 students took to the streets to demand the reinstatement of the Emergency Unemployment Benefit, and in May around 70 students occupied the offices of Labour MP Pete Hodgson in opposition to proposed fee increases in 2002.

For it to be a successful fight however, students and workers need to recognise their common enemy, and organise accordingly. This is a central part of building a new unionised movement, since the idea that tertiary students have nothing in common with workers is an outdated relic of past decades.

The majority of students are not being trained as future members of the ruling class, or even as agents of the bosses with supervisory roles. Instead, they are a real and significant part of the working class of the immediate future. Actual change can only come about through recognition of this, and through unified struggle. It is to this end that we say, **workers and students of Aotearoa, unite and fight!** ■

Dear Socialist Review,

We are writing to try and draw some attention to issues we as a group are ignoring. This was highlighted at two recent branch meetings: one on women's oppression and one on the life of Eleanor Marx. At both of these meetings some of us brought up the need for us to be self-critical, and to look at how we might be unknowingly continuing sexist behaviour ourselves from this sexist society. We need to look not just at the economic, but also at the personal – how women can be made invisible, how their ideas and contributions can be forgotten. Without actually looking at how sexism operates in our own lives, how can we begin to fight it?

The criticism of this was made by some members that this kind of approach was too “inward looking,” and that we should either be focussing on doing things about it or going back to the economics. But at the same time, the issues themselves were not being taken seriously.

The discussion didn't actually seem to be a discussion where people were listening to these ideas of self-criticism, and looking at our own sexism in order to fight it in the wider society.

Is this because people don't actually want to look at these issues in their own lives? Fighting sexism is revolutionary.

It's just as important as the anti-globalisation movement – probably more so. And the place we have to start fighting women's oppression is in our own lives. Sexism is an issue in any group in patriarchal society today, whether we like it or not.

Whether that is people wanting to “move to the economic” instead of facing how we might be being sexist, males talking over females, waiting to speak instead of actually listening, making women invisible and so on. If a group that calls itself revolutionary can't face up to the daily sexism we reproduce, then there is no way it will be able to fight these forces in wider society. ■

Shomi Yoon

Alison Stoddart

Dear Socialist Review,

I really enjoyed reading the last issue of the magazine. One of my favourite sections was the debate on feminism between Penny Hayes and Rae Sinclair. I think both comrades raised many good points and sometimes I had trouble working out where they were disagreeing! But there is one point I do wish to raise in response to Rae's contribution.

Rae suggested in her article that because the words “oppression” and “liberation” were associated with the wave of feminist criticism and activism that burst over the world in the late '60s and early '70s we should abandon them because they now seem outdated. But isn't this exactly how the ruling class want us to think? Don't they tell us words like “class”, “exploitation”, “struggle” and “revolution” are outdated too? In other words, they try and make the ideas and concepts that explain how our class can win its freedom seem irrelevant to today.

But they're not irrelevant at all. Socialists should cherish the idea of “women's liberation” no matter how unfashionable it is. Because it means that, unlike the liberal “feminists”, we won't stop struggling until every rape, every bashing, every act of discrimination has been eradicated from this earth and women and men alike have created a society of genuine social and sexual equality.

For that reason, “liberation” is a word I love. ■

Yours for liberation,
Dougal McNeill



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Penny Hayes, Dougal McNeill,
Brian Roper, J.P. Ryan**

Covers by **Simon Edmunds**

Cartoons by **Hinze**

just what **are** your politics anyway?

The more observant among you may have noticed that this magazine's politics aren't quite the same as the mainstream media's. So just where do we stand? Below are some of the basic political ideas behind our magazine.

Socialism Capitalism is a system of crisis, exploitation and war in which production is for profit, not human need.

Although workers create society's wealth, they have no control over its production or distribution. A new society can only be built when workers collectively seize control of that wealth and create a new state in which they will make the decisions about the economy, social life and the environment.

Workers' Power Only the working class has the power to create a society free from exploitation, oppression and want.

Liberation can be won only through the struggles of workers themselves, organised independently of all other classes and fighting for real workers' power – a new kind of state based on democratically elected workers' councils.

China and Cuba, like the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, have nothing to do with socialism. They are repressive state capitalist regimes. We support the struggles of workers against every ruling class.

Revolution Not Reformism Despite the claims of Labour, Alliance and trade union leaders, the structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class.

They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against workers.

There is no parliamentary road to socialism.

Internationalism Workers in every country are exploited by capitalism, so the struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle.

We oppose everything that divides workers of different countries. We oppose all immigration controls.

We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries. We oppose imperialism and support all genuine national liberation struggles.

Liberation From Oppression We fight for democratic rights. We are opposed to the oppression of women, Māori, Pacific Islanders, gays and lesbians. These forms of oppression are used to divide the working class.

We support the right of all oppressed groups to organise for their own defence.

All these forms of liberation are essential to socialism and impossible without it.

Tino Rangatiratanga We support the struggle for tino rangatiratanga.

Māori capitalists and politicians have no interest in achieving tino rangatiratanga for working class Māori.

The Government and corporate warriors' approach to Treaty claims has benefited a Māori elite while doing little for working class Māori.

Tino rangatiratanga cannot be achieved within capitalism. It will only become a reality with the establishment of a workers' state and socialist society.

Revolutionary Organisation To achieve socialism, the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party. Such a party can only be built by day to day activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

We are beginning to build such a party, linking the ideas of revolutionary socialism to workers' struggles against the system. If you agree with our ideas and want to fight for socialism, we urge you to join us.



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